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Discipline that builds student self-discipline

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DISCIPLINE THAT BUILDS STUDENT SELF-DISCIPLINE

by
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ABSTRACT

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Discipline That Builds Student Self-Discipline
May 1999
Dr. Theodore Johnson
School Administration

The purpose of this study is to explore the effectiveness of a discipline method that builds student self-discipline in the interaction of high school teachers and their students using an action research design. Implementing a discipline system that builds student self-discipline means increasing the effectiveness of teacher management of disruptive students and decreasing the number of disciplinary referrals that are sent to school administrators.

A strategy for training seventeen volunteer teachers in a new disciplinary technique was planned, implemented and evaluated. The teachers involved in the study participated in three workshop sessions designed to teach them a discipline strategy that builds student self-discipline and lowers the number of student referrals sent to vice-principals in the main office. Teachers were surveyed twice throughout the study for frequency of implementation, and their students were surveyed twice to measure any growth in student self-discipline.

The conclusions and implications of this study on discipline that builds student self-discipline suggest an impact on the high school teachers, students and administrators.

Major findings revealed an increase in teacher frequency of discipline strategy use, an increase in student self-management skills reflecting student self-discipline and a decrease in the number of disciplinary referrals submitted by teachers to administrators.

MINI-ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this study is to explore the effectiveness of a discipline method that builds student self-discipline in high school students. Findings revealed an increase in teacher frequency of discipline strategy use, an increase in student self-management skills and a decrease in disciplinary referrals submitted by teachers to administrators.

Acknowledgments

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Problems of student management, student discipline, interrupted teaching, disruptive student behavior and academic underachievement are increasing in the United States (Watson Moore, 1998). Educators are concerned with the effects of students' disruptive behavior on student learning, on teachers' ability to teach all students and on preparing students for the workplace. Teaching students socially responsible behavior that is necessary for the acquisition of job-related skills has taken on a new importance in disciplining and educating students. In order for teachers and school administrators to better manage student discipline, developing changes in student behavior that increase student self-management are considered. Creating change in student behavior from disruptive to self-disciplined is more complex than simply telling a student to do so. Fostering intrinsic motivation in students encourages them to make personal commitments to choosing behavior that is socially responsible.

Simply punitive measures of discipline are mostly ineffective in changing student behavior and may cause resentment and recurring poor actions in students (Elias, 1998). Encouraging student self-control through interactions with school faculty in disciplinary situations, leads to student behavior that is more self-disciplined. Discipline that builds student self-discipline represents an educational organization that is committed to academic achievement as well as socially responsible citizenry. The focus of this study is to explore the effectiveness of utilizing discipline techniques that build self-discipline

through teacher management of student discipline. The intern will use an action research plan to gather and observe data, to implement new disciplinary techniques and to evaluate results of such an implementation in a high school setting.

Purpose

The intern wants to learn about the effects of using student discipline methods that build student self-discipline on teacher-student interaction in the high school in order to decrease the number of disciplinary referrals made to administrators and to foster a collaborative school community of teachers and learners. Changing the disciplinary interaction of teachers and students in a school setting is paramount to increasing student achievement and to facilitating learning (Killion, 1998). Disruptive student conduct impedes academic learning and may indicate a lack of appropriate social skills (Marshall, 1998). In an effort to prepare high school students for a competitive workforce, administrators and teachers need to use disciplinary methods that teach students socially responsible behaviors and that foster intrinsic motivation in students.

The purpose of this study is to explore the effectiveness of a discipline method that builds student self-discipline in the interaction of high school teachers and their students using an action research design. The study will result in the implementation and evaluation of a new discipline system with a sampled population of teachers. Implementing a discipline system that builds student self-discipline means increasing the effectiveness of teacher management of disruptive students and decreasing the number of disciplinary referrals that are sent to school administrators.

Interaction between teachers and disruptive students does not need to be confrontational in nature, but rather can be productive in teaching students social skills

and in developing intrinsically motivated student behavior (Marshall, 1998). Marshall (1998) gives support to the idea that the key element of student discipline that builds self-discipline is the offering of choices by the authority figure. In a disciplinary situation a teacher can be trained to offer students guided choices. Providing a student has choices and makes one of them, the student will be practicing self-control and socially responsible behavior. A school climate of caring and concern for student development both academically and socially develops within a school organization that utilizes guided choices as a tool of discipline. Educators who use student-centered techniques and who express interest in the social development of students and students' future choices, help to create such a school climate (Elias, 1998).

Further, the purpose of this study in student discipline and change is to develop the professional competencies of the intern in the areas of leadership, communication skills, group processes, instruction, performance, evaluation, and organizational management. The intended organizational change is improved teacher management of disruptive students, students developing self-discipline and fewer disciplinary referrals sent to administrators.

Definitions

In order to clarify the terminology used to communicate this study, the following terms are defined within the context of this study: *Disruptive student behavior* refers to inappropriate actions that interrupt the educational process within the classroom, the hallways or the school community. *Student discipline* refers to the teacher initiated interaction between student and teacher concerning disruptive behavior. *Disciplinary referrals* are written forms completed by teachers and submitted to the vice-principals.

They serve as a request for an administrator to act as the disciplinarian and problem-solver concerning the discipline of students. *Student self-discipline* is otherwise described as self-management, having control of one's own behavior and making responsible choices; academically and socially.

Limitations

The boundaries of the study begin with the Lower Camden County School District and extend to one of the four high schools within the school district. The effectiveness of a discipline method that builds student self-discipline is explored at the Edgewood Senior High School. Participants are 20 volunteer teachers and the students with whom these teachers interact.

The limitations of the study are the single site source, the limited sample size and the lack of funding for hiring a disciplinary expert for inservicing. The intern's mentor, the high school principal, requests that the population consist only of teachers who volunteer to participate. The students involved will be limited to those who have interaction with these select teachers. The disciplinary expert may be too costly for the school district to hire. Finally, methods for measuring degrees of student self-control and self-management are not clear from the research.

Setting

The project site is Edgewood Regional Senior High School, which is one of four high schools in the Lower Camden County School District Number One in Atco, New Jersey. Edgewood Regional High School is located in the southern part of the Lower Camden County Regional High School District. This school district serves seven sending districts, Pine Hill, Clementon, Lindenwold, Berlin Waterford Township, Winslow Township and

Chesilhurst Borough, which occupy 109 of the 288 square miles of Camden County. The three communities served by Edgewood Senior High School are Waterford Township, Winslow Township and Chesilhurst Borough. They occupy a substantial portion of the district's total land with a combined 95 square miles (Averbach and Associates, 1988).

Once entirely a rural farm area, the district has experienced steady growth and development as a suburban community. Chesilhurst is governed by a mayor and six member council, while both Waterford and Winslow are run by township committees. Of the 34,000 residents in the three communities, 64% live in a rural setting. The racial composition is varied with 79% Caucasian , 17% African-American and 14% other. The majority of households consist of two parent families, followed by female head of household and a small number of male head of household.

The school district operates five schools, grades seven through twelve, with approximately 5000 students. Facilities include two junior high schools, two senior high schools and a regional day school for students with special needs. Edgewood Senior High School is located on a site adjoining the Edgewood Junior High School. At the senior high school, courses are offered in general education, college preparation, advanced placement and vocational education for the ninth through twelfth grade students. Due to overcrowded conditions, a vote was passed in May, 1998 to dissolve the Lower Camden County School District. Dissolving the school district is projected to take three to five years until completion. The sending districts are commissioned to make plans to receive back their students and to provide their own high school settings and programs.

Edgewood Regional High School consists of 140 staff members, including administrators, guidance personnel, teachers and support staff. The administrative staff

includes one principal, four assistant principals and an athletic director. In addition to 105 instructional staff members, services are also provided by five guidance counselors, two nurses, three hall monitors, ten secretaries, eight instructional aides, one computer technician. Approximately 1300 students, with 35% minority representation, currently attend this high school, which has a low drop out rate. Post-high school pursuits are approximate: 35% attending four year schools, 32% attending two year schools and 12% entering employment. Encompassing a cross-section of socio-economic levels, the population is predominantly middle class.

Significance

The significance of conducting this study lies in the contributions that will be made to participating faculty members, to administrators who handle disciplinary referrals and to those students who have contact with the participating teachers in the high school. Teachers will develop a style of language in their interaction with students that controls a disciplinary situation without upset, confrontation or lost dignity for either party involved. Brigham, Nicolai & Wilcox (1998) find that teacher interaction which directs student behavior rather than telling students what to do more positively effects student behavior. It is the teacher who guides the students by offering choices, while also providing students with an opportunity to learn and practice self-management skills.

The study also contributes to decreasing the involvement of a third individual when managing disruptive students. Administrators are inundated daily with written forms from teachers requesting disciplinary action and often are ineffective in changing a student's behavior simply with punitive measures (Elias, 1998). The students who have contact with participating teachers will experience a change in school climate from punitive to

respectful of young adults. Developing life skills of self-management and self-control will be the focus for disciplining students and changing their disruptive behavior.

Organization

The organizational framework for this study of student discipline is presented in a chapter format. Chapter 1 serves to define the focus, purpose, limitations, setting and significance of this study. Chapter 2 reviews pertinent educational literature in the areas of student discipline, change and professional development. Chapter 3 describes the action research design of the study, the development and design of the survey tools used in data collection, sample populations of teachers and students and sampling techniques, data collection procedures and data analysis. Chapter 4 presents the research findings regarding data collection of disciplinary referrals, teacher surveys and student surveys concerning self-discipline. Finally, Chapter 5 reviews the conclusions and implications for organizational change in the high school, student self-discipline and the possibilities for further study.

Chapter 2

Review Of Literature

The review of literature encompasses information discovered about three areas related to the study. Discipline that builds self-discipline, organizational change and professional development are the three areas that are explored. Problems of student management, student discipline, interrupted teaching and disruptive student behavior are increasing in the United States according to data reports conducted by the *American School Board Journal* and the *U.S. News and World Report* (Watson Moore, 1998). Educators are increasingly concerned with the effects of students' disruptive behavior on student learning, on teachers' ability to teach all students and on preparing students for the workplace. Coupled with student discipline, another concern of American educators is the underachievement mentality of today's children. According to the Carnegie Corporation's 1996 report, *Years of Promise* (Rimm, 1997), a growing epidemic is that of underachievement, which is not limited to any particular race or income level group. Researcher Sylvia Rimm (1997) points to a lack of intrinsic motivation and internal sense of control in students as a main contributor to this epidemic of underachievement. Fostering intrinsic motivation, teaching students self-discipline skills and promoting socially responsible behavior have all taken on new importance in educating and disciplining students.

Maurice Elias (1998) finds that traditional methods of student discipline which are simply punitive measures are mostly ineffective in changing student behavior, and instead

may cause resentment and recurring poor actions in students. He supports that while managing student behavior, school leaders also reveal their institutions' values and beliefs about how people should interact by the discipline systems they employ. Encouraging student self-control through interactions with school faculty in disciplinary situations, leads to student behavior that is more self-disciplined. Discipline that builds student self-discipline represents an educational organization that is committed to academic achievement as well as socially responsible citizenry (Elias, 1998). Improving the disciplinary interaction of teachers and students in a school setting is paramount to increasing student achievement and to facilitating learning (Killion, 1998). Disruptive student conduct impedes academic learning and may indicate a lack of necessary social skills (Marshall, 1998).

Discipline that Builds Student Self-discipline

In an effort to prepare high school students for a competitive workforce, administrators and teachers need to use disciplinary methods that teach students socially responsible behaviors and that foster intrinsic motivation of students. Authors Brigham, Nicolai and Wilcox (1998) found that in order to promote student achievement and to better manage student discipline, educators must develop change in student behavior that increases student self-analysis and self-management. They maintain that creating change in student behavior from disruptive to self-disciplined is more complex than simply telling a student to do so. This process involves intrinsic motivation and the development of self-management skills. Educators may increase student self-awareness in difficult situations, while increasing student competency in choosing appropriate behaviors.

Researchers Denham Martinek, Krajewski and Polka (1998) view the action of disciplining students as a responsibility of teaching on behalf of administrators and teachers. Kushner (1996) also supports the notion that discipline is congruent with instruction and is a continuous process, rather than a one time event. Disciplinarian, Joseph Feucht (1998), uses disciplinary interaction with his students to develop their skills of self-monitoring, reflection and reading. Viewed as an opportunity to teach and learn, discipline becomes an empowering process for all involved in the school community (Geddes, 1991). In an empowered school community, the teachers, administrators and students have the opportunities and are encouraged to both teach and learn (Barth, 1990) in the discipline process.

Interaction between teachers and disruptive students does not need to be confrontational in nature, but rather can be productive in teaching students social skills and in developing intrinsically motivated student behavior (Marshall, 1998). Marshall describes the key elements of student discipline that builds self-discipline as positivity, guided choices, self-evaluation and self-correction. He describes a disciplinary process in which a teacher is trained to offer students guided choices. Providing a student is given choices, the student will have the opportunity to practice self-control and will learn to choose socially responsible behavior. A school climate of caring and concern for student development both academically and socially develops within a school organization that utilizes guided choices, self-evaluation and self-management as tools of discipline. Educators who use student-centered techniques and who express interest in the social development of students and students' future choices help to create such a school climate (Elias, 1998).

Betsy Geddes (1991) has designed and implemented a discipline program which is effective in increasing student self-discipline and in improving teacher management of disruptive students. This discipline program is intended to foster intrinsic motivation, student self-management, socially responsible behavior and a caring community of learners. Creating a sense of community in which all participants are learners and attending to students social and academic needs are necessary components to school improvement (Sergiovanni, 1992). Geddes promotes these basic principles: all students have possibility within for growth, discipline is instruction, adults are attentive to student needs of belonging, control, caring and competency. Outlined below are the prevention strategies which Geddes designed in order to fulfill student needs of belonging, control, caring and competency.

1. Make eye contact, smile, look at students, (touch arm, shoulder)
2. Move toward students as though you like them. Assume they will comply
3. Use kind words...*please, thank you, I would appreciate it*
4. Listen and acknowledge feelings...*I'm sorry to hear that, I see you're upset*
5. Ask, rather than tell. *What will you do...? Will that work for you?*
6. Give choices... *You are welcome to work individually, or consult your neighbor.*
7. Use "I", rather than "You" statements...*I need, I would appreciate, I noticed, It's important to me*
8. Use few words. Say things simply.
9. Acknowledge desirable behavior without rewards or extra points... *Thanks for doing that, Good job*...smile
10. Make sure the work is doable, it matches student ability, students have what they need to be successful with the assignment

11. Address one deficiency at a time...Pick just one for that moment

12. Model and actively teach problem solving skills

Geddes' (1991) discipline program that builds self-discipline is valuable in developing social responsibility and student self-management skills of self-monitoring and problem solving. If the prevention techniques are not effective alone, they may be supported with the intervention strategies outlined below. The following intervention strategies again are attentive to student needs and allow for guided choices.

Before Speaking:

1. Give the "evil eye"
2. Signal, with a movement or head shake, "enough"
3. Walk toward the student
4. Stand close and reach forward (and touch arm, shoulder)

Then

5. Use "I" statements.. *I need you to.. I want.. I will.. I prefer..*
6. Ask, rather than tell... *Will you..? Would you...? Is that appropriate or not?*
7. Don't let your buttons be pushed, or get angry...*Perhaps.* M*aybe so, and we are on page* __.

Reinforce and acknowledge desirable behavior... *Thanks*

8. Give choices that are acceptable to you and enforceable... *Will you be quiet, or move your seat? You are welcome to encourage your peers, or to be quiet. Will you do the classwork now, or with my supervision after school?*
9. Teach responsibility without judgment, blame or shame:

Assign a responsibility.. homework

Wait for problem..	no homework
Lead with empathy..	*Sorry to hear that... What happened?*
Use logical consequences..	*What will you do for tomorrow?*
Reassign responsibility..	homework

10. Hold problem-solving conference:

Empathy..	*Having a hard time? Tough problem?*
Sincere Question..	*What will you do?... May I suggest what other students have done?*
Consequences..	*How might this work for you?*
Allow Ownership..	*Good luck... Let me know how it works.*
Take ownership..	*We will go with my ideas*

11. Involve others... parents, administrators, school resources

A significant aspect to the successful implementation of Geddes' (1991) discipline program is the high level of teacher self-awareness in beliefs, language and action. Researcher Ladson Berry (1994) emphasizes the importance of teacher self-awareness with regard to three particular areas when dealing with aggressive students. In order to diffuse anger or aggression, the teacher must pay attention to these three aspects of the disciplinary interaction: verbal, what is said; paraverbal, how it is said; and kinesics, body movement. Teachers can utilize a manner of speaking and body language in their interaction with students that controls a disciplinary situation without upset, confrontation or lost dignity for either party involved (Geddes, 1991).

Change

Training teachers in a new disciplinary technique, which involves changing personal beliefs, language use and body language, that are not necessarily automatic thoughts or behaviors, may be done cooperatively within a school community committed to teaching, learning and effective discipline (Barth, 1990). Howard Margolis (1991) warns administrators to be aware of resistance from teachers when implementing change in an educational organization. He suggests that the resistance itself is not to be feared, but that resistance is valuable for discovering how people are viewing the change and for generating desirable outcomes for the change. He provides over thirty questions to pose from the teacher's perspective when considering making change.

Another concept to consider for implementing change is the self-evaluation of teachers and their ability to alter the process of their own thinking. Barnard and Neck (1996) describe the difference between "opportunity thinking" and "obstacle thinking". When dealing with change, or a challenging situation, a teacher can learn to direct thinking toward the opportunities rather than the obstacles. Opportunity thinking is preferred, and it empowers people to look for value in a given interaction, rather than only viewing what the interaction is not. Supporting this renewed process of thinking is Christine Johnston (1992), who advocates self-talk and professional talk among school professionals. Empowering oneself by becoming aware of automatic mental scripts full of perception and personal belief is the key to self-talk that is empowering. Among professionals and between teachers and students, adult-like conversation, or professional talk is valuable in promoting change (Johnston, 1992).

Professional Development

In order to implement change and a new disciplinary technique, staff development is necessary. Michael Fullan (1990) maintains that implementing successful change is a function of learning how to do something new and requires a learning process that is continuous. He explains that educational innovations, implementation and staff development are all interconnected. A further review of pertinent literature reveals that professional growth based in meaningful interpersonal communication can empower teachers and the organization to meet their collective goals effectively and collaboratively. Ann Lieberman (1996) refers to the educational reform movement of creating teaching and learning communities from networks of teachers and administrators. She attributes the effectiveness of learning communities to their responsive structure, which acknowledges teachers for their work, empowers teachers in their own professional development and creates a forum for continuous inquiry, exploration and experience.

Another researcher, Liana Forest (1996), comments on teacher isolation in her article on professional development. She maintains that effective professional development consists of collaborative opportunities for teachers to discover and experience for themselves what cooperative structures are like and how they actually work. She also informs that teachers who collaborate with their colleagues are more likely to implement new structures in their classrooms. Author, Susan Ellis(1996), supports the collaborative structure of cooperative learning groups as a means of achieving school improvement that is continuous and transformational. She prescribes the use of team-building to create interest and deepen commitment, of team structures for decision-making and support of implementation, and cooperative structures to ensure individual participation. Ellis also

reports that regular administrative use of cooperative structures, while teaching professionals new skills, enhances teachers' abilities to apply such practices in their own classrooms.

School leaders are charged with the responsibility to manage their organizations, in the most powerful way, in the direction of a school's mission. In order to successfully achieve school goals, management skills must be centered in meaningful collaboration and staff development (Roy, 1996). Staff meetings, that are based in teacher involvement and collaboration, serve most importantly as an empowering administrative tool to meet leadership responsibility, to develop teacher skills and to achieve school goals. Lohr and McGrevin (1989), found that few administrators consider the possibility of using faculty meetings as an organizational tool to foster professional development and collaboration in reaching school goals. Traditionally planned meetings leave individuals sitting next to their colleagues without purposeful interaction of thoughts, ideas or activities. These researchers report that at traditional meetings problems are rarely solved, suggestions are seldomly followed through, group consensus is not reached and progress toward achieving school goals and its mission is not made.

Further review of the literature does indicate that administrative leaders may consider the organizational context of a faculty meeting to be the perfect opportunity in which to build collaborative skills, to develop professional skills and to lead an organization toward its mission. Several educational authors supply strategies for developing staff meetings that involve teachers, develop collaboration and empower the organization. Johnston and Phillips (1996) recommend assigning presenters and gatekeepers among meeting participants. This pre-meeting activity is not only highly engaging for participants, but

also cooperatively interactive. Along with these authors, writers Lohr and McGrevin (1989) also suggest a well structured process of designing and distributing an agenda that supports school goals before the meeting and publishing the meeting minutes a few days afterward.

Other researchers stress that the faculty gathering time is a unique opportunity for administrative leaders to model teaching and learning which is engaging, interactive and productive. Madeline Hunter (1988) relates lesson planning strategies to professional development planning. She maintains that staff development plans can be articulated and worked toward during faculty meetings, provided that these goals are reflected in the planning process. To facilitate successful meetings, Lamon and Shelton (1991) recommend advanced planning, involving those present, starting and ending the meeting on time and evaluating the event.

Individual and group empowerment together with collegiality are significant factors of a successful school organization (Ellis, 1996). Providing interactive, continuous and empowering professional development opportunities is key to effective implementation of new programs. Effects derived from the use of cooperative learning structures, from productive meetings and with attention to change factors may be transformational.

Chapter 3

Design of the Study

Research Design

The general design of this study was modeled on an action research spiral (Anderson, Herr, Nihlen, 1994), which follows a pattern of data collection, reflection, action, further data gathering, more reflection and subsequent action. The action portion of this spiral action research design involved the intern in planning, implementing and evaluating possible solutions to the research problem.

To begin this action research format, the intern interviewed three vice-principals and sent a questionnaire to the entire professional staff of teachers. The data was reviewed to clarify the problems associated with student discipline within the high school. A strategy for training the teachers in a new disciplinary technique was planned, implemented and evaluated. The teachers involved in the study participated in three workshop sessions designed to teach them a discipline strategy that builds student self-discipline and lowers the number of student referrals sent to vice-principals in the main office. Teachers were surveyed twice throughout the study for frequency of implementation, and their students were surveyed twice to measure any growth in student self-discipline.

The second set of surveys were measured in comparison to the first set of surveys concerning teachers and their students. The number of disciplinary referrals made by teachers this year was measured in comparison with the number of disciplinary referrals written the previous year to look for improved effectiveness of teachers handling their

own student discipline problems. In addition, at the completion of each teacher workshop, participants evaluated the intern on her level of proficiency with regard to professional competencies of leadership, communication skills and group processes. Upon final gathering and analysis of the data, a further plan of action was recommended to the administrators who are disciplinarians in the high school.

Development and Design of the Research Instruments

The preliminary questionnaire delivered to each teacher was designed by the intern. It was computer generated as an attractive brochure on the Microsoft Publishing program. The brochure outlined the goals and requirements of participation in this study and the professional training design of the disciplinary technique. The interviews conducted with the high school disciplinarians began with a question about their ability to process the large number of student referrals sent to them on a daily basis and developed into a conversation about their frustrations in dealing with repeat student offenders and numerous referrals continuously submitted by the same teachers.

The survey tool for teachers was designed based on the discipline techniques developed Dr. Betsy Geddes (1991). The focus of the survey is the intervention strategy portion of the discipline technique, which involved eleven steps for teachers to follow. A Likert model, ranging from *1=never, 2=rarely, 3=sometimes, 4=often* to *5=almost always,* was designed to measure the frequency of teacher use of each step in the intervention strategy. The student survey tool was based on Dr. Geddes' proposed goals for student self-management and growth. This survey listed eleven statements regarding student respect, decision-making, responsibility, conflict, compassion and maturity. It was designed with a

Likert model ranging from *1=never, 2=rarely, 3=sometimes, 4=often* to *5=almost always* to measure student growth in self-discipline.

Finally, the evaluation forms designed to measure the intern's professional competency in the areas of leadership, communication skills and group processes were taken from the *National Association of School Principals'* Proficiencies for Principals. Teacher participants completed the portions of the forms that indicate the intern's need for growth: ranging from a low need for growth, to moderate need for growth, to a high need for growth of the competency in question.

Samples and Sampling Techniques

The research instruments were used to collect data from samples from two populations within the high school. The first population that was sampled was the group of teacher participants. Since participation in the study is voluntary, all 17 of the teachers who agreed to learn the disciplinary technique and who attended at least two of the three workshops were sampled.

The second population to be sampled is the group of students who interact with the participating teachers. Each of the 17 teachers chose a class of students, who posed disciplinary challenges for them. Since some classes have 25 or more students, a systematic random sampling technique was used. Every tenth student survey was selected and sampled in order to narrow the population while maintaining its representative nature.

Data Collection Approach

To facilitate the spiral action research design of this study on student discipline, preliminary data was gathered to clearly define the problems associated with student discipline. This data was collected through interviews conducted with disciplinarian

administrators and through the initial questionnaire to teachers. Once the problem was defined, the action part of planning, implementing and evaluating began. The teachers committed to a training program in order to learn the disciplinary technique which builds student self-discipline. Three workshops were facilitated by the intern, who used a video camera to record on videotape the first two meetings, participant interaction and activity.

To evaluate the effectiveness of implementing the new discipline strategies, the intern collected data from the teachers and their students. She used the survey tool to measure the frequency with which teachers used the strategies that they had learned in the workshops. The student population was also surveyed to measure any growth in student self-discipline. Finally, the intern counted the number of student referrals that were sent to the main office by teacher participants.

Data Analysis Plan

Review of the videotaped recordings of the workshop provided a visual account and insight into the level of proficiency and participation employed by the volunteer teachers in mastering the discipline strategies. The Likert survey tool outlining the discipline strategies provided valuable information about the frequency with which the teachers are actually using the technique and if the frequency of use has increased over time. Very importantly, the comparative results of analyzing the student survey tools were designed to indicate any growth in student maturity, self-control, responsibility and self-discipline over the duration of the study. A comparative analysis from last year to this year of the number of disciplinary referrals sent to administrators was useful in determining the effectiveness of this discipline technique in reducing the need for third party involvement.

All analyses contributed to a culminating report of recommendations for further planning, implementation and evaluation in solving problems of student discipline.

Chapter 4

Presentation of the Research Findings

To facilitate the spiral action research design of this study on student discipline, the intern collected data from administrators, participating teachers, these teachers' students and from the administrative office files. The data collection tools ranged from interviews, videotaped recordings, survey instruments, computer files and main office files. The data that was collected pertained to problem identification, frequency of teacher use of discipline strategies, growth in student self-discipline and the intern's need for growth in leadership competencies.

Interviews with vice-principals acting as grade level disciplinarians at the high school, helped to define the problem of the study and to direct the plan of action. Repeat student offenders, an inundation of daily referrals from the teaching staff and a lack of problem-solving practices led to frustration of administrators, dissatisfaction of teachers and limited growth for problem students.

The intern facilitated three consecutive workshops to train seventeen volunteer teachers in a discipline strategy designed to build student self-discipline. The first two meetings were videotaped by the use of a video camera. These videotapes were later reviewed to determine the level of participation, involvement and interaction among these volunteer teachers. While engaged in training and the learning of a new discipline

strategy, the volunteer teachers were viewed to be highly engaged with their peers during paired activities, very attentive to the intern as facilitator and eager to contribute their answers, experiences and suggestions during whole group activities.

In order to measure the frequency of teacher use of the discipline strategies, each teacher was surveyed in October 1998, and again in February 1999, with the same survey tool (see Appendix A). The frequency of use of each of the eleven intervention strategies was measured on a Likert scale of 1=never, 2=rarely, 3=sometimes, 4=often and 5=almost always. In October 1998, the intern received 17 returned teacher surveys. For each discipline strategy, the mean response was calculated to demonstrate an average frequency of use. The mean responses ranged from 2.2 to 3.9 on the Likert scale for all eleven strategies, with a median response of 3.5.

In February 1999, the intern received ten returned teacher surveys. For each discipline strategy, the mean response was calculated to demonstrate the average frequency of teacher use. The second set of surveys revealed a range of mean responses from 2.4 to 4.1 on the Likert scale, with a median response of 3.9. In comparison, the results of the February 1999 survey reveal a growth in the frequency of teacher use of the discipline strategies over this four month period. The percentage of increases in teacher use of the discipline strategies ranged from 0 to 26%, with an average increase of 8.5%. As shown in Figure 1, the bar graphs representing the February 1999 survey responses visualize the increase in teacher use of these newly learned discipline strategies.

In order to evaluate the effectiveness of implementing the new discipline strategies on students, the intern asked the volunteer teachers to survey their most challenging classes.

Each teacher chose a class that posed the most problems in discipline. Students in these classes were surveyed in October 1998 and again in February 1999 (see Appendix B) to determine their pattern of responsible behavior and to measure for growth in their self-management skills. The discipline program implemented by teachers was designed to build student self-discipline.

In October 1998, the teachers returned 310 student surveys. A systematic random sampling technique was used to limit the sample of student surveys while maintaining a representation of the student population. Every twelfth survey was counted, allowing a sample of 25 student surveys for analysis. The survey was comprised of eleven statements to inventory a student's degree of self-management (see Appendix B), and a Likert scale of 1=never, 2=rarely, 3=sometimes, 4=often and 5=almost always was used to measure patterns of student behavior. The mean response of each self-management inventory statement was calculated with a range of 2.92 to 4.24 on the Likert scale, with a median response of 3.76.

In February 1999, the teachers again surveyed the same classes of students and the intern received 240 returned student surveys. The systematic random sample of every tenth survey was selected to provide a representative sample of the student population. The same eleven self-management statements and responses were reviewed from 24 student surveys. This time, the mean responses ranged from 2.96 to 4.67 on the Likert scale, with a median response of 4.29. In comparison, the second set of student survey responses demonstrated a growth in student self-management over this four month period with a percentage range of +1% to +18%. The average percentage of growth in student

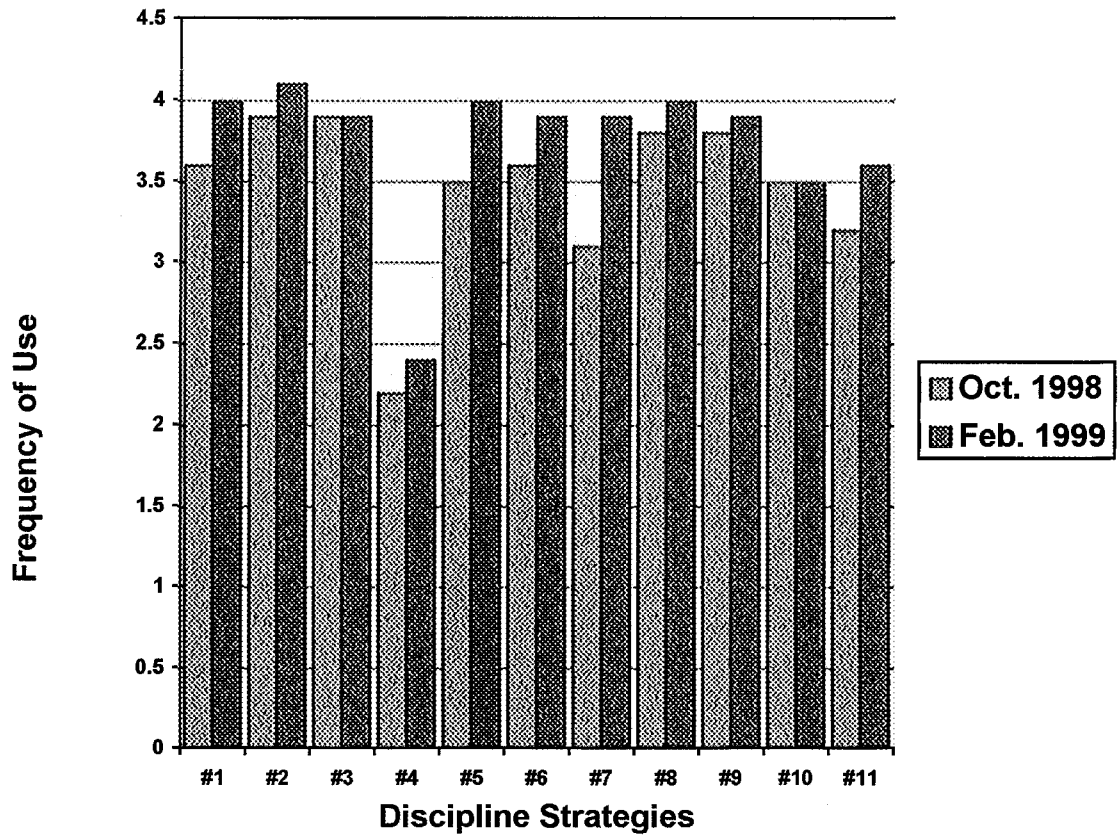

Figure 1. Frequency of Teacher Use of Discipline Strategies

self-discipline was 9.8%. As shown in Figure 2, the growth in student self-discipline is evident as the bar graphs representing the February 1999 responses climb above the bar graphs representing student responses in October 1998.

The teachers who used the discipline strategies during the course of this study were effective in helping students build student self-discipline and also in reducing the need for third party involvement in their disciplinary interactions with students. The intern tabulated the number of written disciplinary referrals made by the volunteer teachers during this school year, from the time they were introduced to the disciplinary strategy in October 1998 to the middle of February 1999. These results were compared to the school's computer file, which revealed data on the number of referrals that were written by the same teachers last year, during the period of October 1997 to the middle of February 1998.

The average number of referrals written by these teachers in the 1997-98 school year was 29, as compared to the average number of 24 that were written this year, 1998-99. An average decrease of 15% in the number of disciplinary referrals was calculated between last year and this school year. As a result of learning new disciplinary strategies, teachers resorted less to involving administrators in their disciplinary interactions with students.

Finally, the intern analyzed the survey results that participating teachers provided with regard to the intern's competency in leadership proficiencies. Three general leadership proficiencies are represented in Figure 3. They are leadership behavior, communication

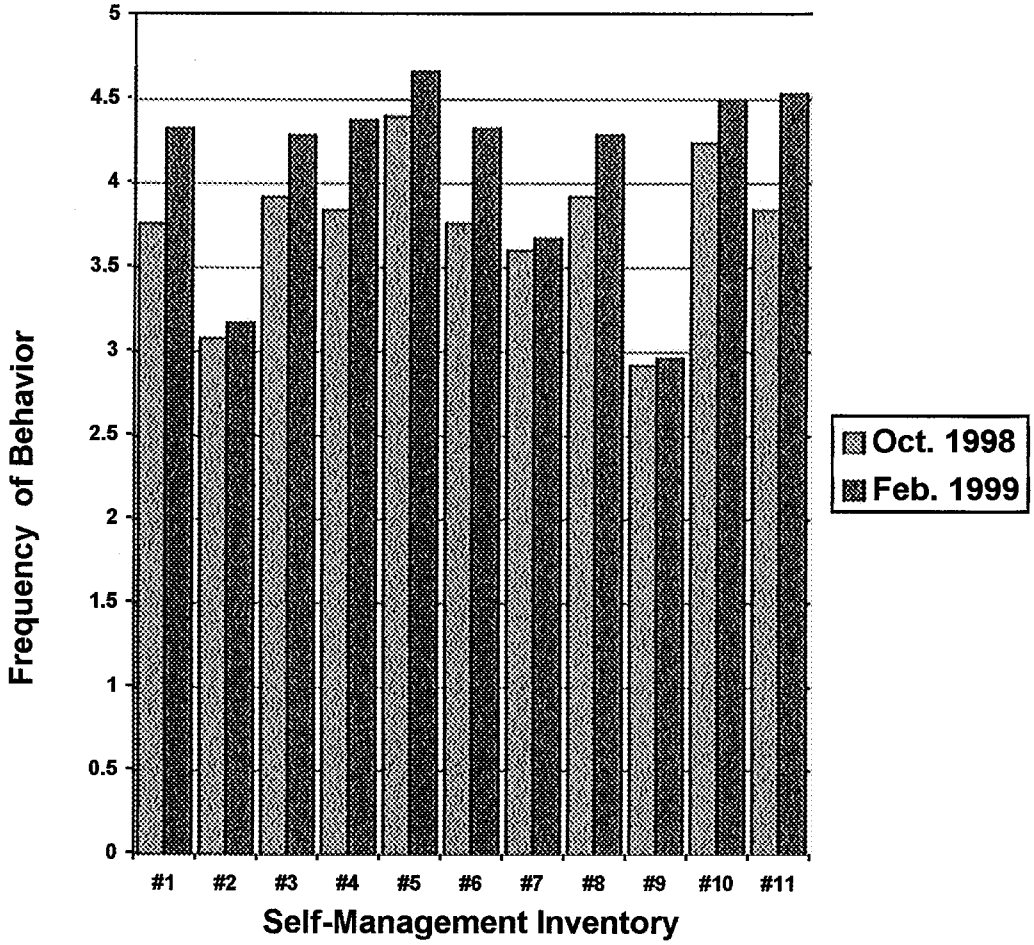

Figure 2. Growth in Student Self-Discipline

skills and group processes. Teachers rated the intern's need for growth in these three areas of leadership on a Likert scale ranging from 1=low need for growth to 7=high need for growth. The mean response for leadership behavior was 1.54, for communication skills, 1.87 and for group processes, 1.16. The teachers perceived the intern's need for growth in these three areas to be between 1=low need for growth and 2=moderately low need for growth.

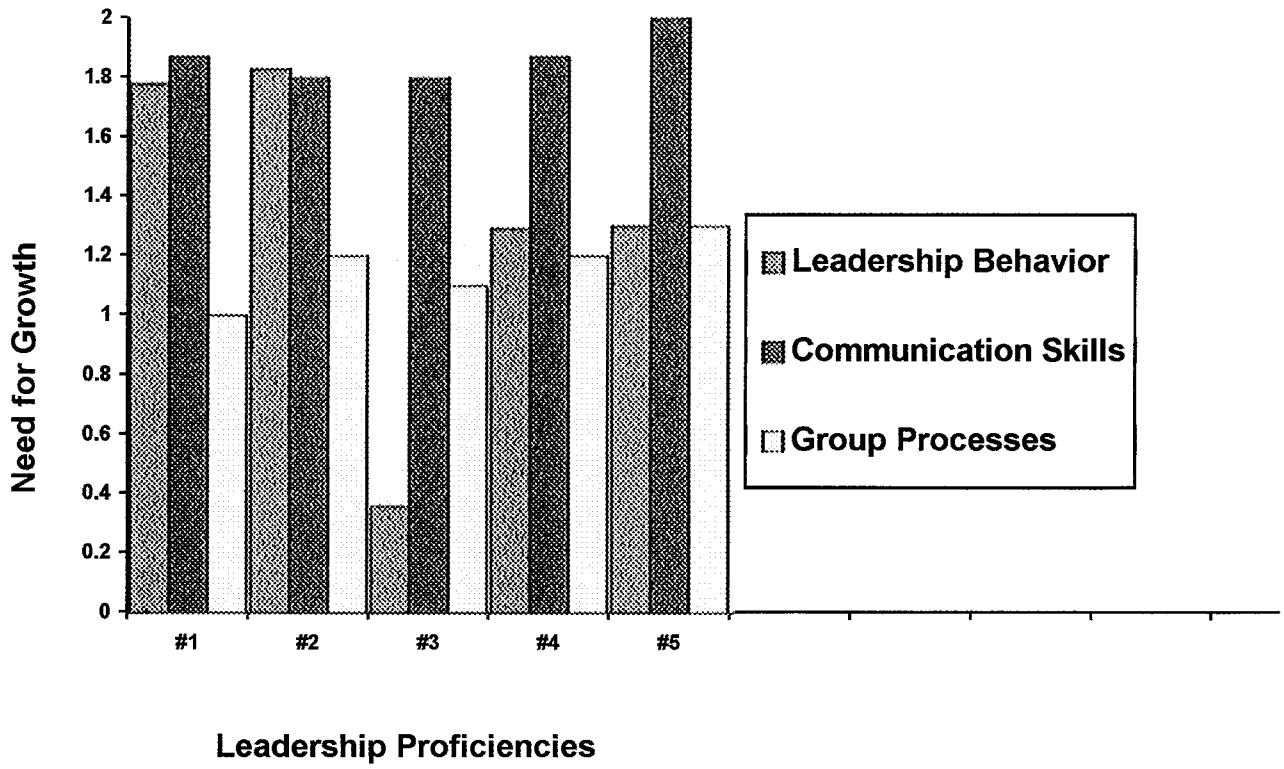

Figure 3. Need for Growth in Leadership Proficiencies

Chapter 5

Conclusions, Implications and Further Study

The conclusions and implications of this study on student discipline that builds student self-discipline suggest an impact on the high school teachers, students, administrators and the intern, and they also offer direction for possibilities of further study. An increase in teacher frequency of discipline strategy use, an increase in student self-management skills reflecting student self-discipline and a decrease in the number of written referrals submitted by teachers to administrators all indicate a renewed interest in self-awareness and transformation in the realm of organizational change.

Over the four month period of observation, the teacher surveys revealed an average 8.5 percent increase in strategy use. The videotape of the first two workshops reflected images of volunteer teachers enthusiastically and professionally engaged in learning the new discipline strategies. The teachers made a conscious effort to discuss and apply the skills that the intern presented in the workshops. Although the increase in teacher use is under 10 percent, the teachers were relatively committed to applying this new discipline strategy designed to build student self-discipline. More in-class support, perhaps from the intern or from peers involved in the program may have further encouraged teachers to continuously apply the new skills in their everyday teaching. Even though their

willingness and openness to learning was evident, mastery and internalization would require an ongoing form of guided and supported practice, reflection and feedback.

During this study, the students of participating teachers benefited from their teachers' involvement in the discipline program. From the student surveys, the intern observed a growth in student self-management skills as indicated by their response choices. An increase of growth in student self-discipline was evident with a 9.8 percent increase from October to February of the current school year. The new discipline program was designed with the student at the center of the program and with the students' primary needs of belonging, caring, control and competence as the basis of development, communication and reflection. Student interaction with teachers involved thoughtful and deliberate communication which was guided by the teacher, but designed to allow the student to make choices and to take responsibility for his/her behavior. If some of the growth in student self-discipline may have been the result of natural maturity, then perhaps this progression was accelerated by their teachers' involvement in the discipline program.

As compared to the previous academic year, the number of disciplinary referrals written and sent to administrators by the participating teachers decreased on average by 15 percent. As a result of learning the new disciplinary strategies, teachers were encouraged to hold their own problem-solving conferences with students rather than write referrals to grade level disciplinarians in the main office. The focus of the disciplinary interactions between teachers and students was to guide students in solving their own problems. As a result, goals were also met of reducing the need for third party involvement and reducing the bombardment of administrative paperwork and referral processing concerning student misbehavior.

Concerning the intern's leadership development throughout this study, her professional competencies in the areas of leadership, communication skills, group processes, instruction, performance, evaluation and organizational management were practiced, developed and enhanced. On three separate occasions, a need for growth assessment was filled in by participating teachers to identify the intern's needs for growth in the areas of leadership behavior, communication skills and group processes. On all three assessments, the need for growth remained between low and moderate. The lowest need for growth was in group processes, next lowest in leadership behavior and third lowest in communication skills. Since the intern has had extensive training and experience with cooperative learning activities, which she utilized to facilitate the workshop sessions, her need for growth is lowest in this area. The scores closer to a measure of moderate need for growth in the areas of leadership and communication may reflect the intern's inexperience in self-expression with her peers and in verbally communicating her goals and intentions with confidence and conviction.

Organizational change is evident at Edgewood Regional Senior High School as a result of this study on student discipline. Teachers were enthusiastically and voluntarily engaged in their own professional development and learning of effective discipline strategies, which directly impacted student behavior and growth in self-management. Improved management of student misbehavior and employed problem solving techniques attributed to a growth in student self-discipline. Another intended organizational change that developed as a result of this study was the reduction of disciplinary referral forms sent to vice-principals in the main office. The need for third party involvement in disciplinary

situations decreased and the influx of paperwork related to disciplinary referrals was reduced.

Areas of consideration for further study might involve a similar study over a longer time period, or continuous study of students over their four years at the high school. These students could be compared to a control group of students not exposed to teachers who have learned the disciplinary techniques and their self-management skills comparatively measured over a four year period. Another area of concern to be studied addresses administrative discipline strategies for working with repeatedly disruptive students. Administrators charged with student discipline could be trained in discipline strategies that build student self-discipline. A study could be conducted to measure the possibility of reducing the number of repeat offenders and repeat offenses committed by the same students. Finally, within a school district, one of the district school's entire faculty, from professional staff to support staff, could be trained in discipline that builds student self-discipline and the growth in student self-management could be comparatively measured against the other schools in the district who do not employ the same techniques for discipline.

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Appendix A

Teacher Survey Tool

DISCIPLINE THAT BUILDS SELF-DISCIPLINE

Teacher Survey: Frequency of Use of ***Intervention Strategies***

All survey results will remain anonymous and confidential.

Please write the number that reflects how frequently you use each strategy:

1=never 2=rarely 3=sometimes 4=often 5=almost always

Thank you!

Before Speaking:

1. Give the "evil eye" _____
2. **Signal**, with a movement or head shake, "enough" _____
3. **Walk toward** the student _____
4. Stand close and reach forward (and touch arm, shoulder) _____

Then

5. Use **"I" statements**.. *I need you to.. I want.. I will.. I prefer..* _____
6. **Ask**, rather than tell... *Will you..? Would you...? Is that appropriate or not?* _____
7. Don't let your buttons be pushed, or get angry _____
   (*...Perhaps. Maybe so, and we are on page __.)*
   Reinforce and acknowledge desirable behavior... *Thanks*
8. **Give choices** that are **acceptable to you and enforceable** _____
   ...Will you be quiet, or move your seat? You are welcome to encourage your peers, or to be quiet. Will you do the classwork now, or with my supervision after school?
9. **Teach responsibility** without judgment, blame or shame: _____

Assign a responsibility..	homework
Wait for problem..	no homework
Lead with empathy..	*Sorry to hear that...(What happened?)*
Use logical consequences..	*What will you do for tomorrow?*
Reassign responsibility..	homework

10. Hold **problem-solving conference**: _____

Empathy..	*Having a hard time? Tough problem?*
Sincere Question..	*What will you do?... May I suggest what other students have done?*
Consequences..	*How might this work for you?*
Allow Ownership..	*Good luck... Let me know how it works.*
Take ownership..	*We will go with my ideas*

11. Involve others... parents, administrators, school resource personnel _____

Appendix B

Student Survey Tool

DISCIPLINE THAT BUILDS SELF-DISCIPLINE

Student Survey: *Degree of Self-Management*

I. Your teacher is engaging in disciplinary work with his/her colleagues at Edgewood Regional High School. We value your perspective. This survey will be used as a tool to measure the kinds of choices you are currently making. Mrs. O'Brien and your teacher ask for your participation at the beginning and end of this program.

All survey results will remain anonymous and confidential.

II. Please write the number that reflects your pattern of behavior.
Write only **one number:** 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 next to each statement.
Thank you!

1= **never** 2=**rarely** 3=**sometimes** 4=**often** 5=**almost always**

1. I respect authority, rules and laws. _____
2. I am able to contribute to and influence public decisions. _____
3. I accept responsibility for taking stands on issues. _____
4. I make choices by thinking about my priorities and values. _____
5. I take responsibility for my actions. _____
6. I can explain my personal commitments. _____
7. I handle conflict in non-violent ways. _____
8. I respect legitimate authority and act responsibly. _____
9. I pay attention to social and political issues. _____
10. I have compassion and respect for the rights of others. _____
11. I make mature decisions when faced with moral/ethical decisions. _____

We appreciate this contribution to our work!.

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